MARVEL
PSR 55

BEDARD
CALAFIORE
McKENNA

EXILES®

BUMP IN THE NIGHT 1 of 3

NEW YORK CITY
A PLACE UNLIKE ANY OTHER.
AND NEVER MORE SO THAN TODAY...

NO, KYRA! VENTURING OUT THERE IS *SUICIDE!*

PART I OF III

I DON'T *CARE*, MOTHER! THOSE MONSTERS *TOOK* BRIAN!

HOW CAN I GREET ANOTHER SUNRISE IF MY LITTLE BOY IS *DEAD?*

AND JUST *HOW* WILL YOU SNATCH HIM BACK FROM THE *NIGHT WATCH?*

I'M NOT SURE, MOTHER... BUT SAVE HIM I *SHALL.*

WE'LL *BOTH* BE HOME SOON...

I STILL LIKED IT BETTER WHEN CALLISTO WAS CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD...

MIND YOUR TONGUE. IF THE NEW MASTER THINKS YOU WERE ONE OF CALLISTO'S CADRE, HE'LL CRUCIFY YOU, TOO!

NOW LET US FIND US A FEW CURFEW-BREAKERS BEFORE CAPTAIN RUSSELL DEEMS US TOO LAZY FOR NIGHT WATCH!

KRASH

YOU HEAR THAT?

AYE. WE'LL HAVE SOME SPORT WITH THE POOR SOULS BEFORE THROWIN' 'EM IN THE DUNGEON...

AHH!

SHADES OF HADES!

EEEYAAGHHH!

WEN-DI-GOOOO!

=CRUNCH=... SHWUMPF-SMAK... =GULP=...

=SOB=

PUBLIC HOUSE

...=HFF=...

...=HFF=...

SHWPFFF

NO!

LORD MORBIUS--!

P-PLEASE...I HAVE A SON...

I'M SURE YOU DID...

...BUT IF THE MASTER CLAIMED HIM, YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO HE IS GONE.

GOOD PEOPLE IN THE TAVERN! HELP ME!

BY ALL THAT'S HOLY, HELP ME!

FOR PITY'S SAKE--!

TOO LATE... TOO LATE...

YOU SHOULD BE HOME SPAWNING YOUR NEXT BRAT, NOT OUT HERE SLAKING MY THIRST!

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE--

...ER...

...AND THAT, HONORED PATRONS, IS WHY WE WARN ALL OF OUR GUESTS TO, AH, NEVER BREAK CURFEW!

PROBABLY SOME CUTTHROAT GETTING HIS JUST DESSERTS. YES... NOW, WHO WANTS AN ALE ON THE HOUSE?!

AYE!

AYE!

AYE!

SO THAT'S THE JOB YOU THINK WE SHOULD TAKE, SIR CALVIN? CUTTING DOWN CURFEW-BREAKERS IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT?

WHAT OTHER HONEST WORK IS THERE FOR FREEBOOTERS LIKE US, LADY CLARICE? BETTER WITH THE VIZIER'S GUARD THAN AGAINST THEM.

WE *COULD* JUST LET HER *STEAL* WHATEVER WE NEED. SHE *IS*, AFTER ALL, A MASTER THIEF.

I FIND YOUR JEST IN *POOR TASTE*, MORPH. YOU MIGHT TAKE A LESSON IN HUMOR FROM THE *REAL* JESTER.

THERE IS A *REASON* WHY "THE BEAK" IS UNEMPLOYED, CALVIN, BUT I TAKE YOUR MEANING.

WELL, OUR *HONEST* CAREER BETTER START *TOMORROW*. NAMORA'S GOLD TRINKETS ONLY FETCHED US ROOM AND BOARD FOR TONIGHT.

YES, THE QUEEN OF FAIR ATLANTIS SURRENDERS HER VALUABLES FOR THE GOOD OF *ALL*. NOW WHAT OF SELLING YON BRACELET ON *CLARICE'S* ARM?

I ALREADY *TOLD* YOU, IT WILL NOT COME OFF! I DON'T KNOW WHY, OR EVEN *HOW* I GOT STUCK WITH THIS UGLY THING, BUT IT WILL NOT LEAVE MY ARM.

I...I FEAR IT'S HAUNTED, OR *CURSED*. THE *VOICES* I KEEP HEARING...

ENOUGH, CLARICE. SHOULD SOMEONE OVERHEAR SUCH TALK, THEY'LL TOSS US OUT OF THE TAVERN.

LET'S ALL GET SOME REST AND FIND GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT ON THE MORROW.

ASSUMING HEATHER *SURVIVES* THAT LONG.

...I'LL *LIVE*, MORPH...LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU *EAT* THOSE WORDS.

THAT'S THE SPIRIT, HEATHER.

:sniff:

:sniff:

NEAT *CLAWS*. REMINDS ME OF SOMEONE I KNOW. I JUST HOPE YOU'RE *NICER* THAN HE IS...

SWIPT

SWIPT

HE...

I AM NOT ESPECIALLY KIND TO *ASSASSINS.*

WHOA, *WHOA*... YOU'VE GOT IT ALL *WRONG!* I WAS SENT HERE BY SOMEONE WHO NEEDS YOUR *HELP!*

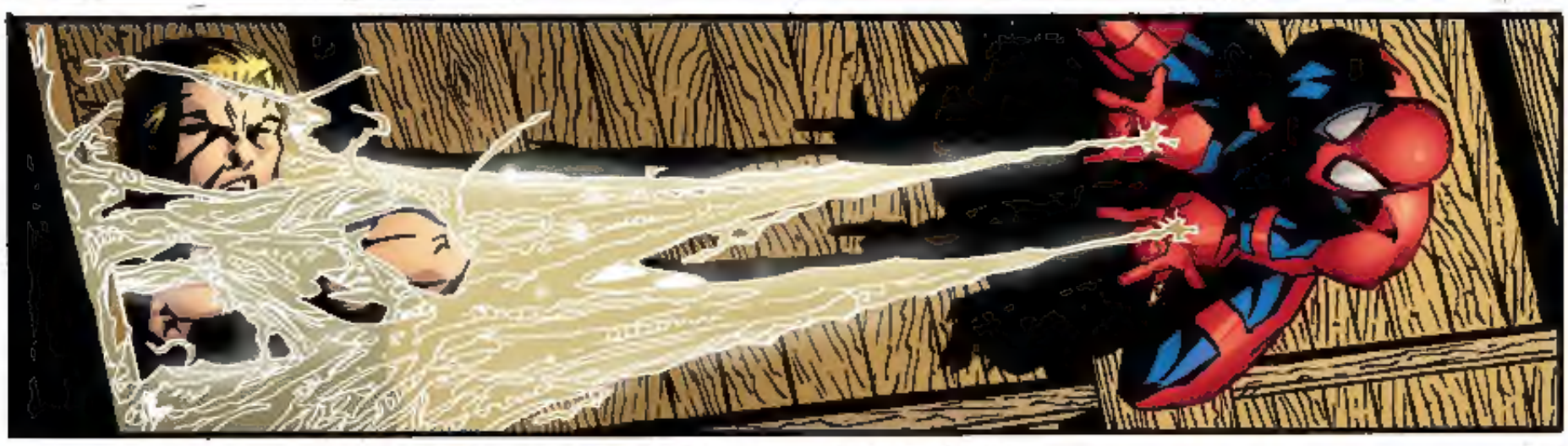
HEY!

I SAID--

BLINK

--I'M HERE--

SHK!



--TO ASK--

THWIP

--FOR HELP!

!

CAN YOU PAY FOR SUCH HELP?

YEAH...THIS WILL DEFINITELY PAY OFF FOR YOU. WAKE UP YOUR FRIENDS, AND I'LL EXPLAIN...

SHK

...SO UP UNTIL A FEW WEEKS AGO, THIS ISLAND-CITY WE'RE IN WAS A PLACE CALLED *MANHATTAN.*

IT WAS COMPLETELY *DIFFERENT* FROM WHAT YOU SEE NOW, BUT IT WAS ALL TRANSFORMED BY AN *ANCIENT WIZARD* I FOUGHT A WHILE BACK. HE REALLY *HATED* ME FOR THAT...

...HIS NAME IS *KULAN GATH.*

HIS *MASTER SPELL* TOOK US BY SURPRISE. IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, MY BEAUTIFUL SKYSCRAPERS AND BROWNSTONES ALL TURNED INTO FORTRESSES AND MINARETS.

CARS TURNED INTO CHARIOTS, STREETLIGHTS TURNED TO TORCHES, GUNS TURNED INTO SWORDS... YOU GET THE IDEA...

"...ALL EXCEPT FOR *ME,* YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBOR-HOOD *SPIDER-MAN.*

"THAT WAS THE *PUNCHLINE* TO KULEY'S BIG MAGIC TRICK. I'M THE ONLY GUY IN TOWN WHO CAN *REMEMBER* WHAT THE BIG APPLE USED TO BE LIKE..."

...I GUESS HE FIGURED ONCE HE CAUGHT AND *TORTURED* ME TO DEATH, AT LEAST I'D KNOW *WHY* HE WENT TO THE TROUBLE.

BUT...THE MASTER'S NAME *ISN'T* "KULAN GATH."

NOT *ANYMORE* IT ISN'T

"SEE, WHEN THIS ALL FIRST STARTED, ONLY MANHATTAN WAS AFFECTED. FOLKS OUTSIDE COULDN'T TELL WHAT HAPPENED BECAUSE THE CITY WAS HIDDEN BEHIND A ***MAGICAL BARRIER.***

"ANYONE WHO ***CROSSED*** WAS INSTANTLY ***TRANSFORMED***. AND NOT JUST THEIR CLOTHES AND EQUIPMENT--THESE PEOPLE FORGOT THEIR FORMER LIVES AND IDENTITIES."

NOW ***EVERYBODY*** WHO COMES HERE, INCLUDING ***YOU***, BELIEVES THAT THINGS WERE ***ALWAYS*** LIKE THIS!

THIS FOOL'S TALE GROWS MORE ***FANCIFUL*** WITH EVERY WORD

RIGHT. ***I'M*** THE FANCIFUL ONE.

TELL ME--HOW DID THE BUNCH OF YOU START HANGING OUT TOGETHER?

I, AH...

YOU DRAW A ***BLANK*** EVERY TIME YOU TRY TO REMEMBER MORE THAN A FEW WEEKS AGO, RIGHT? NOW LET ME ***FINISH...***

"KULAN GATH ROUNDED UP ANYONE IN TOWN WHO HAD SPECIAL POWERS, AND USED HIS *MAGIC* TO BRING OUT THE *WORST* IN THEM.

"I'VE SEEN AVENGERS, X-MEN, NEW MUTANTS AND MORLOCKS ON THE VIZIER'S GUARD, DOING THINGS MORE AWFUL THAN YOU COULD *IMAGINE*...

"...MEANWHILE, SUPERNATURAL BEINGS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD WERE *DRAWN* HERE, LIKE NEW YORK HAD BECOME A *MAGNET* FOR BADNESS.

"KULAN GATH COULDN'T GET *ENOUGH* NEW RECRUITS. THE SPELL HE USED TO UNLEASH THEIR INNER BAD-BOY MADE THEM INTO HIS BEST SOLDIERS.

"THEN HE LET LOOSE THE DARKNESS INSIDE A PRISONER NAMED *JOHNNY BLAZE.* WORST MISTAKE HE EVER MADE."

"THE OLD SOURPUSS NEVER IMAGINED THAT WITHIN THIS POOR GUY MIGHT DWELL SOMETHING EVEN **WORSE** THAN HIMSELF.

"INSIDE BLAZE HID A DEMON WHICH WE USED TO CALL '**GHOST RIDER.**' HIS REAL NAME IS **ZARATHOS**, AND HE UNDERSTOOD THE MASTER SPELL EVEN BETTER THAN KULAN GATH DID.

"THE MINUTE ZARATHOS SNATCHED THAT **AMULET** OFF KULEY'S NECK, HE BECAME THE **NEW** MASTER."

BUT I'M HERE TO TELL YOU THAT WE CAN **FIGHT BACK.** COME WITH ME AND I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO SOMEONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO **DEPOSE** ZARATHOS AND HIS GOON SQUAD.

BUT... WHY ASK **US?**

ONE--BECAUSE YOU'RE **NEW** HERE, SO THE VIZIER'S GUARD HASN'T RECRUITED YOU YET...

...AND TWO-- BECAUSE MY **PARTNER** IS VERY INTERESTED IN THAT **BRACELET**-THINGIE ON YOUR ARM THERE, PINKY TUSCADERO.

MEANWHILE...

THERE'S SOMETHING CAUGHT IN YOUR *TEETH.*

'DIGO...?

I DON'T KNOW... A *KNUCKLEBONE?* AN *EYEBALL?* JUST PICK IT OUT AND MAKE YOURSELF PRESENTABLE.

YOU CAN WASH THE BEAST FROM STEM TO STERN. IT SHAN'T BRING BACK THE TWO *GUARDS* HE DEVOURED EARLIER.

YOU DIDN'T EVEN *BOTHER* TO HIDE THEIR BONES, AND YOU LEFT *ME* NOTHING TO SNACK ON. WHY NOT JUST SPIT IN MY *FACE,* YOU WORTHLESS HEAP OF HAIR?

'TIS *MY* FAULT, CAPTAIN RUSSELL. I SHALL ENDEAVOR TO KEEP A *TIGHTER REIN* ON--

RRR RR RR RR

SHUT UP, MORBIUS. I DON'T CARE HOW YOU KEEP YOUR *PET* IN CHECK.

I *DO* CARE THAT ANOTHER NIGHT HAS PASSED WITH KULAN GATH STILL AT LARGE. THE MASTER DOES NOT LONG TOLERATE SUCH *FAILURE.*

THE FAILURE IS *YOURS*, JACK RUSSELL! MORBIUS SHALL NOT BEAR THE BLAME FOR YOUR INCOMPETENCE!

I THINK YOUR *SKINS* NAILED TO THE CITY GATES WILL *MOTIVATE* THE *OTHERS* TO SEARCH HARDER...

WEN-DI-GOOO!

WEN-DI...

HHRRRRRR--

--RRAHHRRR!

-URK-

!

I COULD WATCH YOU THREE RIP EACH OTHER UP ALL MORNING, BUT NOW IS *NOT* THE TIME TO INDULGE IN *BLOOD SPORT.*

YOU *KNOW* I NEED KULAN GATH HIMSELF ON MY SACRIFICIAL ALTAR IN ORDER TO MAKE HIS MASTER SPELL *GLOBAL.*

YOU *KNOW* THIS, AND YET YOU WOULD RATHER SQUABBLE THAN CAPTURE MY ENEMY.

AND NOW A *NEW ELEMENT* HAS ARRIVED IN MY DARK KINGDOM. SOMETHING I CANNOT QUITE PUT MY FINGER ON. SOMETHING... *ANOMALOUS...*

NEWCOMERS BROUGHT IT HERE. I COULD HAVE *LOCATED* THEM BY NOW IF WENDIGO HAD NOT *EATEN* XAVIER AND CALIBAN...

...BUT WITHOUT THEIR TALENT FOR HOMING IN ON POWER PEOPLE, WE MUST FIND THEM THE *HARD* WAY.

REST ASSURED, *GATH* IS LOOKING FOR THEM, TOO. SURELY HE SENSES THE *OBJECT* THEY BROUGHT...THE THING THAT SENDS *RIPPLES* ACROSS THE FABRIC OF REALITY...

...YOU WILL FIND THESE STRANGERS BEFORE KULAN GATH DOES. YOU WILL BRING THEM HERE BY TONIGHT.

YES, MASTER.

WENDIGO.

YES, MASTER.

FAIL ME IN THIS, AND I SHALL TURN YOUR OWN CRIMES *AGAINST* YOU.

...AND YOU WILL *BEG* FOR DEATH RATHER THAN SUFFER MY *PENANCE STARE...*

ELSEWHERE...

WE SHOULD'VE LEFT *HEATHER* BACK AT THE TAVERN.

...UNHH...

SHE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN *SAFE* THERE. DON'T WORRY, WE DON'T HAVE MUCH FURTHER TO GO.

WHAT'S *WRONG* WITH HER, ANYWAY? SHE *SICK* OR SOMETHING?

ONLY SINCE WE *ARRIVED* IN THIS CITY.

AND I SHALL MOST LIKELY *JOIN* HER IN ILLNESS SHOULD WE SPEND MUCH LONGER IN THIS VILE BILGE WATER

WHY DOES THIS *FRIEND* OF YOURS HIDE DOWN HERE? I THOUGHT MOST OF THE VIZIER'S GUARD USED TO *LIVE* IN THESE TUNNELS.

THE *MORLOCKS*, YEAH...THIS WAS THEIR HOME ONCE. 'COURSE, THE SEWERS WEREN'T QUITE SO *RUSTIC* BEFORE EVERYTHING WENT ALL DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS...

AFTER ZARATHOS TOOK OVER, THE OLD CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD TRIED TO *ASSASSINATE* HIM.

HER NAME WAS *CALLISTO*, CHIEF OF THE MORLOCKS. THEY ALL ENDED UP *BURNED ALIVE* DOWN HERE SOMEWHERE, BUT I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT...

NOW!

BLOONK

LADY BLINK!

WE ARE BETRAYED!

-NFF-

ILLYANA!

THWIP

JUST FULL OF TRICKS, AREN'TCHA? THE REAL X-MEN OUGHTTA SUE FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT!

YOU OKAY, KID?

...WHU...?

DISARM THE GIRL, I'LL TAKE THE MAN-SPIDER!

BLINK

STOP!

BLINK? ARE YOU INJURED? WHAT BECAME OF YOUR *GARB?*

MAGIK'S SWORD MUST'VE BROKEN THE SPELL THAT CHANGED US ALL INTO CONAN *WANNABES.*

SHATTERING SPELLS IS *PRECISELY* WHAT ILLYANA'S *SOUL-SWORD* DOES.

IT IS THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF THE CHILD'S *MYSTICAL MIGHT.* NO SORCERY OR ENCHANTMENT CAN *ENDURE* THE BITE OF THAT BLADE.

RELAX, FOLKS. THIS IS WHO SENT ME TO FETCH YOU. BELIEVE IT OR NOT, HE'S ON *OUR* SIDE NOW.

IT'S *TRUE.* YOU'LL UNDERSTAND THIS ONCE YOU'RE ALL FREE FROM THE MASTER SPELL...

...BUT NOW THAT I'M REALLY ME AGAIN, THE TALLUS *CONFIRMS* IT--OUR *MISSION* HERE IS TO PUT THIS CREEP, *KULAN GATH*, BACK ON HIS THRONE!

INDEED, FOR THE ONE WHO NOW OCCUPIES THAT SEAT WOULD BRING TO THIS WORLD CRUELTIES EVEN *I* HAVE NEVER DREAMED OF!

NEXT: TEMPLE OF DOOM